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DISTRICT 29

PRESS RELEASE



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S.B. 4 Targets Immigrant Communities

Austin – Sen. José Rodríguez, Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, issued the following statement on today's committee hearing of Senate Bill 4:

Texas depends on immigrants for its economic vitality, from those who pick crops to those who create technology and jobs. Following the President's lead, some Texas politicians are attacking the people and policies that have helped Texas diversify its economy and enrich its culture. We reject these policies of fear.

We have defeated similar proposals in the past, but this is the first time that we are considering the proposal under the backdrop of a President recklessly targeting immigrants and minorities. The Texas Legislature cannot follow in his footsteps.

Some specifics:

- The most recent version of S.B. 4 not only makes local law enforcement liable by forcing them to make complex judgments on immigration laws, it also adds campus and hospital police to the mix, placing university students and patients under suspicion.*
- Local law enforcement would be required to presume any immigration detainer request is valid. Detainers are defined broadly as verbal or written requests from ICE. **However, detainers are not legal warrants.** They are requests from the federal government based on the suspicion of a violation of federal immigration laws, which are civil in nature, not criminal. Our system of government provides the presumption of innocence; this would violate due process by imposing a presumption of guilt based solely on a detainer request.*

- *This bill creates the conditions for costly lawsuits against local governments, and will force local law enforcement to choose between breaking state law or violating the constitution.*
- *Using the threat of cutting off state grants, particularly criminal justice grants that serve constituencies such as victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, is both cruel and in opposition to the stated purpose of the bill, which is public safety. In what way does it make sense to punish communities in the name of public safety by making them less safe? Cutting off state grants will hurt crime victims, military veterans, and many other people who have nothing to do with setting jail policy or immigration enforcement.*

The Senate Committee of State Affairs Hearing can be viewed live online at this following link:
<http://www.senate.texas.gov/bin/live.php>

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair); Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation, and Veterans Affairs and Border Security.